

## Your responsibilities

With proper maintenance, a well-built driveway should last eight to 10 years.

When the driveway is new, be extra careful not to mark it. On a hot day, asphalt can be easily marked by ladders, bicycle kick stands and other pointed or heavy objects. After a period of curing, the risk of marking decreases.

You may want to install curbstones alongside the driveway to improve its appearance and prevent grass from growing through the asphalt.

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Planning on fixing up your home? Free information on home improvements, siding and consumer credit is available from:

Consumer Information Centre  
Ministry of Consumer and  
Commercial Relations  
555 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2H6  
Phone: (416) 963-1111

## Consumer Services Bureaus

250 Windsor Ave., 6th floor  
Windsor, Ontario  
N9A 6V9  
(519) 254-6413

Box 5600, Terminal 'A'  
London, Ontario  
N6A 2P3  
(519) 679-7150

P.O. Box 2112  
119 King Street West, 5th Floor  
Hamilton, Ontario  
L8N 3Z9  
(416) 521-7554

555 Yonge Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2H6  
(416) 963-0321

139 George Street North  
Peterborough, Ontario  
K9J 3G6  
(705) 743-8728

1673 Carling Avenue, Suite 102  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K2A 1C4  
(613) 725-3679

199 Larch St., 5th floor,  
Sudbury, Ontario  
P3E 5P9  
(705) 675-4378

P.O. Box 5000  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
P7C 5G6  
(807) 475-1641

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# Paving: how to avoid the pitfalls.

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Many Ontario consumers have been ripped off by fly-by-night driveway pavers who are better at paving their portfolios than paving driveways.

Although most do an excellent job, a few unethical operators leave behind a trail of cracked driveways, incomplete work and angry consumers.

Paving a driveway involves more than spreading asphalt beside your yard. Whether you're having a new driveway laid or the old one repaved, you should know exactly what kind of work needs to be done, how to choose a good company, and what to look for in the contract. And you should be aware of your rights and responsibilities.



Ministry of  
Consumer and  
Commercial  
Relations

## Know what needs to be done

Before beginning, check your property boundary to ensure you're not paving your neighbour's lot.

If you don't have a clear idea of what is required from base to sealer, an unethical paving contractor may be able to talk you into unnecessary, expensive work or inferior materials.

You will also have to decide whether excavation is necessary. If the stone under the driveway isn't deep enough to provide a firm foundation or if the new or repaved driveway would be higher than the surrounding ground, excavation is usually required.

Crushed limestone is generally preferred for the base because it compacts well. For new driveways, at least 100 millimetres or four inches of crushed limestone is required. For regrading driveways, enough limestone must be used to ensure proper drainage. A 460 millimetre or 18 inch fall is needed for every 30 metres or 100 feet of driveway. In addition, the driveway should slope away from the house and garage.

Coarser grades of asphalt are more durable. A mix known as HL3A is generally used for home driveways, while a coarser HL3 mix is used for highways and steep driveways because it provides better traction.

About 50 millimetres or two inches of *compacted* asphalt should be used on your home driveway. If the asphalt is thicker, it will remain soft when compacted. Don't let a contractor use 75 millimetres or three inches of *compacted* asphalt, unless it is being applied in two layers.

Sealer, which makes the driveway more oil and grease resistant, should be applied about 60 to 90 days after paving. Don't apply it too early because it doesn't mix with the oil in the fresh asphalt.

## Choose a reputable company

Choosing a company that will charge a fair price and provide good workmanship can be difficult.

That's why it's important to shop around. Make sure you get at least three written estimates which include a detailed price breakdown for *all* work.

Remember that the contractor giving the cheapest estimate doesn't necessarily do the best job. Check his or her reputation by contacting your local Better Business Bureau. Ask friends to recommend pavers.

Ask the pavers for names and addresses of people for whom they have recently worked. Find out if the customers are satisfied. Or better still, inspect the work yourself.

Be wary of pavers who canvass neighbourhoods offering bargain prices. Make sure the company you are dealing with will still be around to handle any problems you may encounter.

## The contract

Examine the contract carefully. Make sure you understand *everything* in it.

The following terms must be included in every contract according to The Consumer Protection Act:

- the names and addresses of the buyer and seller;
- a detailed description of goods and services including whether the driveway is being excavated or regraded;
- a detailed statement of how you will pay for the work;
- any warranty or guarantee on the goods and services.

You should also insist on having the following included in the contract:

- starting and completion dates;
- the responsibility the contractor takes for workmanship;
- depth of crushed limestone to be added;
- number of mm or inches of compacted asphalt;
- dimensions of the total area to be paved;
- drainage requirements.

To help prevent weeds and grass from growing through the pavement, weed killer should be sprayed before paving. If you want this or any other extra service performed by the paver, make sure it is written into the contract. In addition, you should look for any blank spaces and mark them N/A (not applicable) or Nil.

## The guarantee

Make sure the guarantee clearly states what is covered. Most problems will show up within the first year. So don't be misled by an offer of a lengthy guarantee.

## Payment

Don't pay more than 10 per cent as a deposit before work begins. Always make your cheque payable to the company.

Don't pay cash. Pay by cheque so you will have a record of the transaction.

## Buyer protection

Under The Business Practices Act, no company is allowed to engage in unfair business practices by making false, misleading or deceptive claims.

If you feel the contractor made a clear misrepresentation you may send a letter cancelling the agreement. If this doesn't bring satisfaction, you may take the contractor to court under the Act.

Under The Consumer Protection Act, you may cancel a contract made with an itinerant (door-to-door) seller within two working days of receiving your copy of it. You may cancel by sending a registered letter to the company or by delivering it personally to the address on the contract.

This Act also requires pavers to register with the ministry of consumer and commercial relations. Guard the consumer protection available to you by dealing only with registered pavers. To check a paver's registration or to find out more about your rights, contact the consumer services office nearest you.